

## **Building Community Social Health through Sexual Violence Prevention—Local Health Department Involvement Fact Sheet**

Public health entities are taking leadership in sexual violence prevention at the state level through the Rape Prevention and Education (RPE) program at the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) AND through Center of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at the national level (see attached fact sheet entitled “Sexual Violence: A Serious Health Problem”).

Through a grant agreement with the CDC, ISDH partners with local community service providers, organizations serving underrepresented populations and universities doing sexual violence prevention work at regional and local levels. **ISDH also wants to include local health departments in its work on this issue.** Currently, ISDH leads a council that is conducting a statewide sexual violence prevention assessment. From information, feedback, and data gathered during the assessment, the council will draft a state plan for sexual violence prevention.

ISDH seeks to involve Indiana’s Local Health Departments (LHDs) in the assessment process because:

- LHDs will be educated about the public health approach to violence prevention;
- Involvement will help LHD staff to build capacity and knowledge on sexual violence prevention and strengthen the public health approach for communities;
- Involvement will allow LHDs to connect with those in the community that work with sexual violence and child abuse prevention work, as well as those who help victims. This will lead to LHDs and other agencies collaborating with one another and maximizing resources.

To encourage LHD investment in this process, ISDH is asking one (1) LHD in each of the ten districts to take a lead in hosting a regional community meeting to discuss sexual violence. ISDH will sponsor the meeting and two outside facilitators will lead the discussion. The host LHD responsibility is to collaborate with ISDH staff and facilitators to secure space, provide basic refreshments, recruit community stakeholders, and assist with meeting set-up. More details about the meetings and data to be gathered will be provided at a later date.

Because the state plan will focus on PREVENTION of sexual violence, the conversation will be solution-focused. Two main topics are:

- Circumstances and problems in the community that may help contribute to the problem of sexual violence among youth and adults;
- Brainstorming possible solutions and steps to take to prevent sexual violence, and to support healthy relationships and families in the community